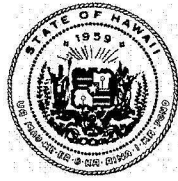


LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR



LILLIAN B. KOLLER, ESQ.  
DIRECTOR

HENRY OLIVA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809

February 5, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Chair  
House Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Lillian B. Koller, Director

SUBJECT: H.B. 2707 - RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION

Hearing: February 5, 2008, Tuesday, 9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this bill is to establish a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION:** The Department of Human Services (DHS) very strongly supports this bill. The proposed bill seeks to acknowledge grandparents, who are willing and able to care for a child, as a preferred placement for a child who is in need of out-of-home care pursuant to chapter 587, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS). The proposed change is consistent with national trend, Federal law and child welfare best practices to ensure that children in State's custody are provided with the opportunity to stay within their family, whenever safe and appropriate.

Specifying grandparents as a preferred placement does not mean that children who need out-of-home placement will

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AGENCY

automatically be placed with grandparents. The safety of the child is paramount and consideration of the child's safety is the most important part of the any placement decision.

Children under the placement responsibility of the Department can only be placed into homes that meet foster home licensing requirements. The Department has been increasing capacity to provide support services and training to foster parents through our contract with Hui Ho'omalu. Grandparents would have access to all supportive services available for foster parents.

Grandparents are a very special and integral part of the natural support system for a family. Placing a child with grandparents has positive effects and improves stability for the child. It helps to ensure that, when safe, the child can stay within the family system and sustain family and sibling relationships that support the child's safety, permanence and well-being and connection with family culture and heritage. In addition to simply being family, grandparents often bring other strengths and resources, including additional life experience and maturity that benefit the child.

Perhaps the most compelling reason should be that grandparents **are** part of our children's family, our 'ohana - let them be so acknowledged. It **is** the right thing to do!

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

CHIYOME L. FUKINO, M.D.  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH



STATE OF HAWAII  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING  
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT  
250 SOUTH HOTEL STREET, SUITE 406  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2831

NOEMI PENDLETON  
DIRECTOR

Telephone  
(808) 586-0100

Fax  
(808) 586-0185

**Committee on Human Services and Public Housing**

**HB2707, RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION**

**Testimony of Noemi Pendleton  
Director of Executive Office on Aging  
Attached Agency to Department of Health**

**Tuesday, February 5, 2008**

**9:00 a.m.**

1 **Department's Position:** The Executive Office on Aging supports the intent of this bill as this  
2 gives consideration to a grandparent for out-of-home placement of children needing child  
3 protective services and defers to the Department of Human Services to determine if it is in the best  
4 interest of the child to be placed with the grandparent(s).

5 **Fiscal Implications:** Unknown

6 **Purpose and Justification:** EOA recognizes that many older adults in Hawaii are caring for their  
7 grandchildren. According to the report which was authored by Dr. Lori Yancura, there are over  
8 14,000 grandparents that are primary caregivers for over 33,000 grandchildren in the state of  
9 Hawaii. These grandparents raising grandchildren (GRG) are playing an important part in  
10 ensuring the well-being of Hawaii's children. Relatives play an essential role in helping to meet  
11 the needs of children who are unable to live with their parents.

12 Establishing a grandparent preference for out-of home placement children needing child  
13 protective services provides the following benefits: 1) Children can live with people they already  
14 know and trust; 2) children can maintain their personal and cultural identity; 3) families learn to

1 rely on their own resources and strengths; and 4) relatives participate as responsible and integral  
2 members of the child and family's support team. Grandparents raising grandchildren will be  
3 connected to a support system that can provide assistance such as financial help, planning, legal  
4 services, and adoption as these are part of the Child Protective Services (CPS) system. EOA  
5 supports the intent of this measure and defers to DHS to determine if it is in the best interest of the  
6 child to be placed with the grandparent(s).

7 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**HB 2707 RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION**  
House Committee on Human Services & Housing

Date: February 5, 2008

Time: 9:00a.m.

Room: 329

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Aloha, Chairperson Shimabukuro and members of the Committee on Human Services and Housing. My name is Oswald "Oz" Stender, Trustee At Large to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA). OHA **strongly supports HB 2707** to establish a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

**Pipili no ka pilali I ke kumu kukui.**

*The Pilali gum sticks to the kukui tree.*

Said of one who remains close to a loved one all the time, as a child may cling to the grandparent he loves (ʻOlelo Noʻeau 2662).

There are over 14,000 kupuna raising their grandchildren in the state of Hawaiʻi. In a recent Department of Human Services report, there were almost 60% of Child Protective Service cases of which the children were of Native Hawaiian descent. The reasons of more grandparents raising their children include, "increase drug abuse among parents, teen pregnancy, divorce, the rapid rise of single-parent households, mental and physical illnesses, AIDS, crime, child abuse and neglect and incarceration" (Bryson and Casper 1998). Alarmingly, 90% of the Child Protective Service cases in which a child needs immediate intervention were drug related.

All families regardless of economic and social background face adversity. However, Native Hawaiian families face greater adversity due to additional stressors that may hinder a child's upbringing, emotional well-being and education, particularly in situations involving child protective services. Kupuna and children are the most vulnerable family members due to economic hardship and health risks. However, when a family faces crisis, the meaningful connection of family members can deter against the turbulent winds of challenges and obstacles. This can be true of the deep bond between a grandparent and grandchild.

The support of bill HB 2707 can help to strengthen this connection that will enhance a commitment towards one another, quality time spent together, along with coping with stress and building resiliency.

This connection also serves as a gateway for instilling life values such as cultural knowledge and practices, family moʻolelo (storytelling), cultural identity, and spirituality to be transmitted from one generation to the next.

OHA supports HB 2707 to establish a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to present testimony.

-----Original Message-----

From: John Tomoso [mailto:John.Tomoso@co.maui.hi.us]

Sent: Sunday, February 03, 2008 10:17 PM

To: HSHtestimony

Subject: Testimony on HB 2707 and HB 2708

To the Honorable members of the House Committee on Human Services who have scheduled a public hearing on bills relating to grandparent involvement in childre protective services proceedings on Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2008 @ 9:00 a.m. in Room 329

Aloha kakou.

HB 2707 and HB 2708 allow grandparents who are raising grandchildren to have legal and therapeutic standing in CPS proceedings involving their mo'opuna.

In our experience with kupuna participating in our federal Title III-E National Family Caregiver Support Program, we are convinced that these grandparents or "GRG" are the "glue" who are keeping children with their families and in family environments that are positive, in the face of many losses and absentee parents. Please support these bills.

Me ka mahalo pono,

John A. H. Tomoso, MSW, ACSW, LSW

Maui County Executive on Aging

808-270-7350

john.tomoso@mauicounty.gov

- - - - -  
County of Maui.

IT Security measures will reject attachments

larger than 12 MB, and will block or quarantine

high-risk file types in attachments.

**TESTIMONY OFFERING COMMENTS ON  
HB2707 - RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION**

February 5, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii hereby provides testimony to the House Committee on Human Services and Housing on HB2707 – Relating to Child Protection.

The Legal Aid Society of Hawaii is the largest non-profit provider for direct civil legal services in the State. Further, since 1996, we have assisted over 2,000 children as guardian ad litem on Oahu, Kauai, Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i and Lāna'i. We also represent parents on Kauai, Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i and Lāna'i and have represented kinship caregivers, including grandparents, throughout the state. Of many of the stakeholders involved in this conversation, we are one of the only stakeholders other than DHS who actively participate in all aspects of child welfare cases.

This bill seeks to confer a preference to grandparents in the placement of children subject to the child welfare statute. While we believe in the importance of kin in foster care and recognize how family can be the best placement for children removed from their parents, we do not believe that this bill is the right solution to the problem.

**Kinship Care vs. Non-Relative Foster Placement – An On-Going Debate**

Over the last few years, there has been a fairly vocal debate between the Department of Human Services and others around the issues of kinship care. DHS has been strong in their preference for such care with reported situations of the removal of a child from a non-relative foster placement to kinship caregivers one to two years after child welfare intervention. Previous bills reflected this concern by attempting to codify a preference for the current foster home for a foster child if kinship care was not found within a certain number of days. While this debate has been heated, everyone involved have had the best interest of the foster child in mind.

**Grandparent Preference Would Provide DHS An Excuse When It Fails to Identify Kin Early and Ultimately Harms the Child**

The proposed solution would only add to the complexity of the current problem by allowing DHS an excuse for late identification of kinship caregivers and forcefully removing children from homes where they have bonded and been provided for. Recent cases have shown DHS' zeal in placing children with kin (in one case with a marijuana smoking family member) after two years – in some cases removing two year olds from the only families they have known. Again, it is not that children should not be with kin, it is that we should not be giving licensed to DHS to correct their failure to identify kin at the early stages of removal to the detriment of the child.

**DHS Currently Has Licensed to Determine Foster Custody Placement and Does Not Need a Statutory Change to Promote an Administrative Kinship Preference**

Under Chapter 587, foster placement prior to permanency is within the realm of DHS and not the court. §587-\_\_\_ specifically states that the court vests foster custody in DHS or another agency, not in a specific home. As such, DHS already has licensed under its current rule a preference for kinship caregivers which does not have to be codified. If the legislature intends to amend this responsibility to bring placement decisions into the court, then additional language will need to be amended.

## **The Problem Is DHS' Inability to Identify Kin Early in Foster Custody Cases and Provide Responses to Inquiries by Potential Kinship Placements**

We believe this bill is a reaction to the inability for grandparents and other interested family members to get information about children in their family in the foster care system. It is also a reaction to the failure of DHS to identify early potential kinship caregivers and provide adequate answers to grandparents and other kin.

For example, there are numerous examples of grandparents finding out their grandchildren were removed and wanting to be foster placements, but being re-buffed by DHS. Our intake hotline reports calls from grandparents seeking to gain foster custody of their grandchildren and upset with DHS, but in closer examination we find that the grandparents cannot be licensed because of a criminal history. In a recent case, a grandmother was seeking information as to why she couldn't be the foster parent to her foster children and despite a number of calls to DHS social worker never heard back. This experience is not uncommon.

### **Early Identification of Kin Not A Kinship Preference Will Better Solve the Problem**

The best solution to this problem, we believe are amendments to Chapter 587 that require DHS to identify kin and other interested persons for placement of a foster child very early in the removal of a child from his or her parents. Statutory language should require DHS to report to the court their efforts to locate kinship and continue to actively seek kin. DHS should also be required to provide feedback and information to grandparents and other kin as to why they believe a placement. In addition, these amendments broaden the category of grandparents to "interested persons" which include not only grandparents, but other kin and potential friends to the child. To this end, we recommend deleting of the current proposed language in the bill and replacing it with the following which would require early identification of kinship and other interested persons:

#### **Add a new definition to §587-2 of interested persons:**

"Interested Persons" means extended family members, friends and other interested persons other than the parents who are important in the child's life and can provide support to the family. The department and authorized agencies shall identify all interested persons within six months of assuming foster custody of the child.

#### **Revision of §587-25 requiring DHS to provide detailed information as to their attempts to locate and identify extended family and/or friends available to the child's family:**

**§587-25 Safe family home guidelines.** (a) The following guidelines shall be fully considered when determining whether the child's family is willing and able to provide the child with a safe family home:

- 10) Whether there is a support system of extended family and/or friends available to the child's family and what attempts have been made to locate and identify extended family and/or friends;

**Adding to \_\_\_\_\_ a section which requires DHS to provide written responses within 10 days of an inquiry from an extended family member and/or friend as to their potential as a foster placement and if denied, the specific reasons why and the right for an administrative appeal:**



We recognize that these proposed amendments are quite extensive and we are open to revised languages based on the interest of the other interested agencies and organizations. However, we do believe that our recommendations can provide the starting point for a candid conversation between all those concerned with the best interest of children in the child welfare system.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Nalani Fujimori  
Deputy Director  
527-8014

## Grandparent

To: Rep. Mail S.L. Shimabukuro      CHAIR  
Rep. Karl Rhoads                      VICE CHAIR

From: Johnny Lee Harmon      PRESIDENT  
Parents for Righteousness

Subject: HB2707 : establishes a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective service.  
HB2708 : permits a child's grandparent to participate as a party at certain protective hearings.

Hearings: Date: Tuesday, February 05, 2008  
Time: 9:00am  
Place: Conference Room 329

I am in support of HB2707 & HB2708. Grandparent should be able to participate in the hearings because they (grandparent) are the back bone of the family. They have the knowledge and wisdom. Grandparents got the strength to keep the family together. They (grandparents) spend most of their time with the kids like going to the school's functions and teaching the kids how to say there ABC'S and 123'S. Grandparents even take the childrens to outings such as going to the park, swimming at the pool, fishing. Things that their parent can not do due to having 2-3 job to take care of the bills and putting food on table. So what would this world be without GRANDPARENTS.

Page 1

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOUSE

Grandparent

Sincerely,  
Johnny Lee Harmon  
President  
Parents for righteousness

February 4, 2008

To: Rep. Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair  
FROM: Linda Santos, President & CEO, Foster Family Programs of Hawai'i  
RE: HB 2707

Hearing: February 5, Tuesday, at 9 AM, Capitol Conference Rm. 328

**Purpose:** House Bill 2707 – Establishes a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

**Introduction:** I am Linda Santos, President and CEO of Foster Family Programs of Hawaii, which provides quality care to the children of Hawai'i. We provide services to prevent foster care placement; support children and families involved in out of home placement; and assist young adults emancipating from the foster care system.

**Agency Position:** Foster Family Programs supports the intent of this bill, which gives preference to a child's grandparents, when a child under the jurisdiction of the Department of Human Services, is being placed in out-of-home care due to abuse/neglect.

Grandparents are already a part of the child's family system and can provide support and continuity to a traumatic out-of-home placement. Grandparent placement can ensure that children continue relationships with family members and siblings and provide safety, stability and familial support. Grandparents also support the child's identity, history and family traditions and customs. Most importantly, grandparents are the often the most willing family member to take grandchildren into their home.

There is much evidence based practice and research that supports the long term benefits of placement of children with relatives. This research shows that kinship care is less traumatic and disruptive than non-kin foster care and provides more stability and fewer placement changes for the child. Additionally, kinship care provides more continuity in family relationships, community ties, and can offer growth and development within the child's culture and community. Lastly, research concludes that children placed in out-of-home care over 12 months maintain a higher stability rate with kin than non-kin.

Furthermore, data from the 2000 U.S. Census shows an increasingly apparent role of grandparents as caregivers for their grandchildren in recent years. There are 4.5 million children nationally that lived in their grandparents' households. In Hawaii, 38,051 children, or 12.9 percent of all children, lived grandparent-driven households. It is in this regard that the agency supports preference for out-of-home placement of children needing protection under chapter 587, Hawaii Revised Statutes, being given to grandparents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**February 4, 2008**

**The Honorable Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair**  
Human Services and Housing Committee

**Subject: HB2707, Relating to Child Protection**  
And  
**HB2708, Relating to Child Protection**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 5, 2008, 9:00a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**Purpose:** The purpose of **HB2707** is to establish a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

**Position:** We strongly support **HB2707** to give preference to grandparents for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services

**Purpose:** The purpose of **HB2708** is to permit a child's grandparent to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

**Position:** We strongly support **HB2798** to permit a child's grandparents to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

To the Honorable Maile S. L. Shimabukuro,

The Tutu and Me traveling preschool program of the Partners in Development Foundation would like to express our strong support of HB2707 and HB2708.

We believe that there is rarely any other individual who could care for a young child with as much love, understanding and compassion as one's own grandparent. Grandparents are so often the only physical and emotional safe haven for children whose parents are unable for whatever reason, to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their child. We thank you for lending your support to these and other initiatives which will ensure capable, loving grandparents a rightful place in their grandchildren's lives.

Thank you,

Dawn Lui  
Statewide Operations Manager  
Tūtū and Me, Partners in Development Foundation

TESTIMONY OF Anuheia Diamond, Kokua 'Ohana Foster Family Liaison  
Partners In Development Foundation – Kokua 'Ohana

**IN SUPPORT OF  
HB2707 – RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION**

**House Committee on Human Services and Housing (HSH)  
Rep. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Chair  
Rep. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair**

Conference Room 329, 9:00 AM  
February 5, 2008

Aloha Representative Shimabukuro and esteemed members of the committee:

I am writing to you in full support of HB2707, which gives preference to a child's grandparent or grandparents in concern with the out-of-home placement of children under the jurisdiction of the department of human services.

As a Native Hawaiian and Kokua 'Ohana Foster Family Liaison, I am most familiar with the cultural as well as systematic challenges evident within Hawai'i's child welfare system as a part of the department of human services. The present bill, HB2707, recognizes both national and state statistics reporting growing numbers in grandparent-headed households, demonstrating the need for our kupuna or grandparents to be highly considered, provided they can provide the safe and nurturing home necessary to care for the child.

At Kokua 'Ohana, we aim to find a balance between our cultural and governmental ideals within our foster care system. HB2707 is that balance. As a Foster Family Liaison, I acknowledge that the legislature establish this Act to institute a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children, better suiting the goals of positive development, care within the home, safe custodianship, as well as the ultimate goal of reunification.

I sincerely thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB2707 and politely urge the passage of the Act. For further information, please contact me at [ediamond@pidfoundation.org](mailto:ediamond@pidfoundation.org).

**February 4, 2008**

**The Honorable Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair**  
Human Services and Housing Committee

**Subject: HB2707, Relating to Child Protection**  
And  
**HB2708, Relating to Child Protection**

Hearing: Tuesday, February 5, 2008, 9:00a.m.  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**Purpose:** The purpose of **HB2707** is to establish a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

**Position:** We strongly support **HB2707** to give preference to grandparents for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services

**Purpose:** The purpose of **HB2708** is to permit a child's grandparent to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

**Position:** We strongly support **HB2708** to permit a child's grandparents to participate as a party at certain child protective hearings.

To the Honorable Maile S. L. Shimabukuro,

The Tutu and Me traveling preschool program of the Partners in Development Foundation would like to express our strong support of HB2707 and HB2708.

We believe that there is rarely any other individual who could care for a young child with as much love, understanding and compassion as one's own grandparent. Grandparents are so often the only physical and emotional safe haven for children whose parents are unable for whatever reason, to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their child. We thank you for lending your support to these and other initiatives which will ensure capable, loving grandparents a rightful place in their grandchildren's lives.

Thank you,

Diane T. Acoba, Teacher  
Tutu and Me – West Kaua'i  
Partner's In Development Foundation  
Office: (808)335-0501 | Fax: (808)335-0503  
[www.pidfoundation.org](http://www.pidfoundation.org)

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**From:** Jacqueline T, Chong [mailto:chongj001@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 04, 2008 4:29 PM  
**To:** HSHtestimony  
**Subject:** Fw: HSH Hearing, Feb 5, 9am, Conf. Rm 329  
**Importance:** High

**Subject:** Fw: HSH Hearing, Feb 5, 9am, Conf. Rm 329

**FAVOR**

**House Committee on Human Services and Housing**

**Committee Hearing**

February 5, 2008

9:00 a.m.

Representative Maile Shimabukuro, Chair

Representative Karl Rhoades, Vice Chair

And Members of the Committee

-

Aloha,

The Na Tutu supports the intent and purpose of HB 2707 which establishes a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children. This is of great concern for grandparents and family members in Hawaii. Ohana, hanai, and aloha, are slowly disappearing from our society. Culturally, minor children have



always been cared for by parents and their family members, aunties, uncles, cousins, or close family friends. When a child is taken from this family unit and placed in a temporary out-of-home environment, not only does it cause great stress on the family but greater trauma on the child. It is also not unheard of for the child to be adopted without notification and taken from the state, thus losing all touch with their blood related kin.

Na Tutu recognizes that not all grandparents are willing or able to care for a child and recommends that “relatives or someone with close family ties” be included in this bill.

We ask for your support.

Thank you,

Jacqueline T. Chong, Chair

Na Tutu, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

February 4, 2008

TO: Honorable Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair  
Committee on Human Services and Housing

FROM: Carol Morimoto, LSW  
1011 Prospect St. #806  
Honolulu, HI 96822

SUBJECT: H.B. 2707 Relating to Child Protection

Hearing: Tuesday, February 5, 2008 at 9:00 am  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of H.B. 2707 is to establish a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

**POSITION:** I strongly support House Bill 2707 to give preference to grandparents for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

I am a licensed social worker in Hawai'i and have been working in the field for 15 years. Throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to see first-hand the positive impact that grandparents can have on the well-being of children. It has been proven through research that placing children with relatives can have lasting benefits to the child. Grandparents can provide not only a stable and loving home but they also bring their culture, life experiences, knowledge and family connections that are all integral components to a child's identity.

The passing of this bill will be beneficial to Hawai'i's children who are in need of out-of-home placement. I strongly urge the committee to pass H.B. 2707.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

February 4, 2008

TO: Honorable Maile S. L. Shimabukuro, Chair  
Committee on Human Services and Public Housing

FROM: Cynthia Shimabukuro, LSW, ACSW  
46-441 D Kahuhipa Street  
Kaneohe, HI 96744

SUBJECT: H.B. 2707 Relating to Child Protection

Hearing: Tuesday, February 5, 2008, 9:00 am  
Conference Room 329, State Capitol

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of H.B. 2707 is to establish a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

**POSITION:** I strongly support House Bill 2707 to give preference to grandparents for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

As a community based social worker for the past 20 years in Hawai'i working with children and families I have witnessed the need for foster children to have family connections. I worked for several years with youth who were emancipating from foster care. Invariably, those with family ties seemed to do better as adults than those in which the ties were not maintained. The continuity of care, connectedness to culture and family values, as well as the strength of family ties can be brought to the foster care relationships by grandparents. I believe that by establishing a grandparent preference, we are moving forward in our drive to protect children yet, not do further harm to them by increasing the likelihood that children needing out of home care will be placed with appropriate family members in safe and loving homes and able to maintain their family connections.

I strongly urge the committee to pass HB 2707.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

**From:** Oswald Stender [mailto:oswalds@oha.org]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 04, 2008 10:19 AM  
**To:** Colleen Young  
**Subject:** FW: HB 2707 and HB 2708

Mahalo. Oz

**From:** Oswald Stender  
**Sent:** Monday, February 04, 2008 8:28 AM  
**To:** 'repshimabukuro@capitol.hawaii.gov'  
**Cc:** David Rodriguez; Jim McMahon; 'ATSark@dhs.hawaii.gov'; John Alamodin; Lei-Ann Durant  
**Subject:** HB 2707 and HB 2708

Dear Rep. Maile Shimabukuro: Your Committee will be hearing HB 2707 and HB 2708. Both bills have to do with foster children. One is to require DHS to establish a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services and the other is to permit grandparents to participate as a party at child protective hearings. Currently grandparents are left out of the loop for the care of their mo'opuna in cases where children are taken from their parents by DHS. I personally, as a young boy, have experienced this situation. I have had a number of calls at OHA from Tutu's who have been denied the opportunity to intervene because they either were not notified or have no standing to intervene. I send you this e-mail because regrettably I will not be able to attend the hearing tomorrow. OHA is submitting testimony today to support these bills. These bills also has the support of DHS. Mahalo for your consideration of these bills. Aloha. O.K. Stender, Trustee, Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

## TESIMONY

To the House Committee on Human Services and Housing for Bill scheduled to be heard by HSH on Tuesday, 02-05-08 at 9:00 am in House conference room 329.

From Patricia Urieff, MSW, ACSW, LSW, with twenty-four years of experience providing social work services to children and families.

### **HB 2707 RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION.**

Establishes a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

#### **Regarding *What Should Happen When Children Taken into DHS-CPS Custody.***

When Child Protective Services Investigations show child (ren) at risk of harm to the degree that the child must be removed, assessment for placement of the child must include the biological grandparents. There is a natural connection between biological grandparents and the child (ren).

#### **Regarding *How***

- Heavy responsibility lies with the DHS Worker and Supervisor to assess for safety, bonding, and capacity to provide fulltime care to each child. An important factor to determine is which grandparent [paternal, maternal, hanai caregiver for over six months] does the child (ren) feel bonded to, with whom does the child have a strong relationship?
- The DSH-CPS assessment should be extended whenever the child(ren) had been left with a hanai grandparent for a period of time [over six months] that resulted in the child (ren) feeling a strong bond to that caregiver.
- `Ohana Conferencing should include both biological and hanai grandparents for discussion about *Best Interest of Child (ren)*, how they can all work as a team toward the child living where the bonds are strongest and all the other grandparents supporting the child living in a grandparent's home.

Testimony of Corrina Moefu, a Grandmother and a Foster Family  
Liaison for Partners In Development-Kokua `Ohana

IN SUPPORT OF  
HB 2707-RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION

Human Services and Housing Committee  
Rep. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro, Chair  
Rep. Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair

Conference Room 329, 9:00 a.m.  
February 5, 2008

Aloha Chair Maile Shimabukuro and members of the committee:

On behalf of my mo`opuna (grandchildren) we support HB 2707 which establishes a grandparent preference for out-of-home placement of children needing child protective services.

We believe in the purpose of this Act to establish a grandparent or grandparent's preference for out-of-home placement of children needing protection under chapter 587, Hawaii Revised States.

We acknowledge that the legislature recognizes that many grandparents are willing and able to provide a nurturing and safe home for their mo`opuna (grandchildren). From Hawaii island to Niihau, from the housing projects to the sands of Lanikai, no matter which part of the State, all the grandparents I know and have talked story with, wants only the "very best" for their mo`opuna. With this Act, they shall be given **preference** to care for their mo`opuna (grandchildren) providing they have a safe home. If they need any assistance with the general license process, they can call on PIDF-Kokua `Ohana to assist them. "E Laulima Kakou No Na Keiki" (Let's work together for the children). Grandparents are willing and able to do what needs to be done for our mo`opuna, our `ohana, our communities and our state.

We thank you for the opportunity to testify and respectfully urge the passage of HB 2707. For further information, please contact me at [cmoefu@pidfoundation.org](mailto:cmoefu@pidfoundation.org).